BRITISH CONSULATE ROME

Tolfa 9th Septr 1871

My dear Tom

Your letter was a joy to me, as I was able to render you the smallest comfort under your heavy affliction — I hope you get out in the fine summer for I see that you have had Italian heat up to 84 Fah. whereas here it has been only 75.

I have been in tip top enjoyment during August & Septr taking 10 baths & 60 walks of 4 & 5 miles a day, but a cold north wind came on & floored me giving me a Catharrh for several days but I'm on my pins again until the 23d when I must attend to the shop it being the end of the quarter

The mountain air of this place is so dry & soft that I always pick up, indeed I may say that I almost owe my life to it for I hear of fatal cases of rheumatism, not that I am quite

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Thomas H. Severn Esqre
Lyme St (late Albert St)
Camden Road
London N.W.

free, but I am so far recovered as to be able to do all my duties & enjoy life, not fashionable life but simple pleasant existance which is as much as I can possibly desire at my age — my rheumatism has only put my right hands "out of drawing" but not at all impaired my looks for I have not the smallest sign of a wrinkle & my brown hair has grown on the top of my head — How you'd be amused if you saw me toiling thro' the chestnut forests & scrambling up & down the mountains & sweating until I have not a dry thread on me, when I return I put on dry woollen & I am rubbed down like a horse with a horse brush

The people I am staying with are intelligent kind & good with no idea of stinting or cheating but keep a good table & excellent wine — we have a "merenda" every week that is we go to a rural dinner in some Vineyard seat on our elbows in the midst of fine scenery

I hope poor dear Maria is comfortable & able to go out with you — How odd 'tis for me to have only to think of myself after so many years thinking only for others — Not a word of English have I spoken for 6 weeks — I send you some "queens heads" for I have many

your loving brother Joe